

side blows, the better it will be for the interest of the shareholders of these railways, and the safety of the public.*

MR. LAYARD'S RESEARCHES AT NIMROOD.

SINCE the British Museum has undertaken the excavations, I have been pushing on my researches in various directions as well as the means allowed will permit; and, with far less than one-quarter of the sum expended by the French at Khorsabad, I trust we shall have twice as much as they obtained, with respect to objects of art and to important historical information. I think I have already given you some account of the nature of the building which I am exploring in the mound of Nimrood. As there are buildings of several distinct epochs amongst the ruins, and as I have examined many other edifices in this part of Assyria, I can now form some opinion upon the architecture and mode of building of the Assyrians. Their palaces, temples, or whatever these buildings may be, were all constructed on one plan—a nest of chambers and halls leading one into another, the entrances formed either by gigantic human-headed winged lions, or bulls with similar attributes, or by large slabs on which are sculptured winged figures, perhaps the guardian deities of the place. The rooms are constructed of large slabs, 8 or 9 feet square, and from 8 to 12 inches thick, each having sculptures and inscriptions. There is not a stone in these buildings which has not one or the other, and in Nimrood generally both. Above these slabs were walls of sun-dried or kiln-burned bricks, richly painted, sometimes with figures, at others with ornaments, shewing considerable taste in the design and disposition of the colours. The interval between the slabs, forming a wall between two chambers, was filled up by mud bricks—mud mixed with a little straw, and simply dried in the sun—which have maintained their consistency to this day, and appear to have the only extraordinary power of resistance. The roof was probably constructed of beams, with wood, straw, and mud to form a compact mass, as houses are covered in in this day throughout this part of the East. The most, indeed the only perplexing part of the matter is, the external architecture, and the means adopted for lighting. Upon these two points I have been utterly unable to form any conjecture. It is most probable that the Assyrians were unacquainted with the use of the column. The Persians, who borrowed their sculpture and ornamental architecture from the Assyrians, probably introduced columns.

The sculptures of Persepolis are almost fac-similes of those of Nineveh, the exterior architecture being of Persian addition. It is scarcely probable that the halls and chambers were sunk in the earth for the sake of coolness, as I have heard it suggested, or why should a mound have been constructed for the reception of the building? There is no other communication between the rooms except the doors, and no windows are to be seen. Light could only have been received from above. However, in the sculptures, windows are frequently represented in the towers and walls of castles; but of course in a nest of rooms only the outer could have received light by such means. The sculptures were painted either in whole or in part. At Nimrood I have only found on the marbles, blacks, reds, blues, and whites, and these appear to be the principal, if not the only colours used in painting figures. At Khorsabad, I believe greens and other colours were found. The ornamented bricks have yellows, and various shades and tints of the above colours. With regard to the antiquity of the ruins of Nimrood, it is probable they will be found to exceed considerably what had been originally conjectured. As there are buildings of different epochs in the mound, I

have been able to obtain from the inscriptions which they contain, the names of many kings of the Assyrian dynasties, and to fix the relative periods of most of the other ruins known in Assyria. From them I can prove beyond a doubt, that Khorsabad was founded at a much more recent epoch,—perhaps 500 years later than the earliest edifice at Nimrood, and that the ruins opposite Mosul, usually called Nineveh, are of the same epoch as Khorsabad. The earliest building at Nimrood, which is also the best preserved, was founded by Ninus (if Major Rawlinson's reading of the name be correct, and there are many facts corroborative of his opinion). The second edifice was erected by his son; but between this and the last there was a lapse of many generations, as can be easily proved by the names of kings which occur in various parts of the ruins. The founder of the last building was of the family of the builder of Khorsabad. You will understand by these facts how important, in an historical and archaeological point of view, the inscriptions furnished by these ruins will prove to be. I have, however, not been satisfied with exploring Nimrood, and have been examining many other remains in the country. Two days ago I was fortunate enough to discover the entrance into a new building in the mound opposite Mosul. The sculptures hitherto removed are in a most dilapidated state; but as I advance into the mound hope to find them in better condition; at least, I hope to obtain a good collection of inscriptions. From Nimrood I have secured a good collection of sculptures; above sixty have already been sent to Bagdad. Amongst them is an obelisk, in black marble, about 7 feet high, and evidently of the highest antiquity. It appears to have been made to celebrate the Indian conquest of some monarch, probably Ninus himself, or Sennacherib; it is in the finest preservation. I have succeeded in moving to the bank of the river one of the large winged bulls, about 10 feet square, and hope, during the week, to give him a companion in the shape of one of the lions. Without any mechanical means at my disposal, and many difficulties to contend with, you may conceive I have had hard work to effect the safe removal of such large blocks. I hope to be enabled to send them to England. The pair would make a splendid entrance to an Assyrian Museum or "Hall of Nineveh."

A. H. LAYARD.

THE EXHIBITION AT WESTMINSTER HALL.

THE exhibition of oil pictures at Westminster Hall being arranged, the cleaning and varnishing of the pictures was, on Monday and Tuesday, an anxious and busy occupation for the artists, and afforded them an opportunity of mutual advice and last-finish touches, which, at the Royal Academy, is enjoyed by the members of that society only. The doors of the hall were opened to them at five o'clock each morning, and from that early hour until eight or nine in the evening, the busy toil, intermingled with friendly hints or discussion of the various subjects and claims, occupied them in a state of unusual excitement. All that we have seen were unanimous in reckoning it the finest and most interesting exhibition ever seen in this country. Though different opinions are expressed as to a few of the paintings, still the leading features and merits of four-fifths of them are pretty well determined among artists.

Mr. Poole has a large composition of King Edward's generosity to the furnished inhabitants of Calais, which for colour and likeness of nature is represented as of surpassing excellence. Mr. Horsley's dying Henry 4th, Prince Henry placing the crown on his head, is also, notwithstanding objections to the short figure of the prince, esteemed a master piece for sentiment, picturesque effect, and beautiful execution. Lauder's "Christ blessing little children" is, perhaps, superior to any former production by that artist, combining character and expression with good execution and colouring. Armitage's "Overthrow of the Sikhs by General Sir Charles Napier," is by some described as eminently skillful, by many as French mannerism without interest in the episodes. Townsend's "Prince Charles in the Oak" is said to be cleverly painted, but

confused, whilst Mr. Watts, who obtained so much fame by his "Cæcilius" in the exhibition of Cartoons, does not appear to have improved by three years' residence in Italy: his "Alfred teaching his subjects the importance of a navy" is said to be like an Italian distemper sketch for fresco.

Sir William Allan's "Battle of Waterloo" is an extensive view of that memorable day; and Sydney Cooper, another of the Academy competitors, has the "Final Charge of the Guards breaking the Cuirassiers," very clever in its details of horses and men, but less impressive or correct as a description of the event than Jones's ample representation. Nelson's victories are also depicted, and with considerable success; but the figure compositions, contrary to what has been usual among us, from their number, importance, and merit claim precedence and general attention. Noel Paton's picture gives less satisfaction than was anticipated, as its skill and elaborate finish are combined with mannerism. Thomas's allegorical composition, though somewhat flat, is described as shewing great ability. Severn's "Allegory of Queen Victoria," as Victory with black wings perched on the limb of an oak, like Ophelia over the deep waters, is thought too mystical for an English public, who will much more relish the "Death of King Richard," by Crosse, that of Harold, by Pickersgill, Lucy's "Religious Emigrants," "The Charter of Henry I. exhibited to the Barons by Cardinal Langton," by the Foggos, Claxton's "Funeral of Sir John Moore," and various other interesting subjects from "Cromwell's Refusal of the Crown," and "Spenser reading his poem to King Edward and Queen Philippa," Lord Corston's solemn picture of strife and death, the awful nightfall after the Briton's Defeat, by Dighton, "The Loss of the White Ship," by Woolnough, "The History of a Merchant Vessel," by Brownrigg, and the "Acts of Mercy," by W. Riviere.

Most of these, and several more, are improvements on works which have already gained reputation to the artists. Salter's edition of Alfred (winning the beautiful book) is a pleasing and clever performance. Bendixen, Morris, Blakeley, Howard, Rippington, Aglio, J. P. Davis, R. Evans, and a score of very young artists, have also contributed to this very successful collection of British national works of art. Even Haydon is here again, and advantageously, in his "Banishment of Aristides."

Next week we shall see them for ourselves.

FOREIGN ARCHITECTURAL AND COLLECTORIAL INTELLIGENCE.

The Paris Library.—The late charges brought against some or other department of Public Works in France, seem also to extend to the above structure and establishment. The head librarian, Mr. Naudet, has published a pamphlet in his justification, to which some other officers have succeeded. The Paris Library consists of four departments, most strangely bungled together—printed books, MSS., coins and antiquities, and charts and maps. The conservators form a council, of which the head librarian is the president. The late improvements and rebuilding of the library seem to be suspended on account of these squabbles, and it is the *Palais Mazarin* which forms the object of contention between the architect and the common council of the city of Paris. According to the statements of the former, the palace is in a state of ruin—the latter complain of the long and gloomy facade, which encroaches on a valuable space in the most thriving part of the French metropolis. It was believed that the intention of rebuilding the present library was fixed; but now it seems that the French *Conseil de Municipalité* objects, and proposes four other localities for the present one. But if it should ever remain where it is, the council propose that the old buildings be demolished, to widen the street.

Rome.—Picture destined for the English market.—A large historical picture by Schrader, has made a great impression in the Roman capital. It represents the surrender of Calais at the moment when Edward III. had given orders to execute the six burgoes, who had surrendered as hostages for the welfare of their native city. This impressive event has been seized by the artist with much clearness of

* "Whatever the proximate cause of the neediness at the Bee Brides," says the *Standard*, "it is evident that the structure was not sturdy enough for all contingencies. Roman structures did not thus crumble to pieces in the life of the builder. But the architects did not know our contract system. They had not reduced great public works to a simple question of pounds, shillings, and pence. They took a pride in throwing in a good deal for nothing, for duration, for art's sake, for dignity; they did not calculate cost to a penny, or space to an inch, or materials to an ounce. They had to satisfy more than a contract—ambition. We superintended, indeed; but what vigilance can suffice where the famous blood of command is engaged? We could not observe of laws, of secular precedents, of commercial customs; but 'good work' personal pride, the generous moribund to commerce, are enforced among us by no rewards and penalties: personal worth obtains slight and transient notice. The contractor outside the liberal terms of his contract, the engineer teaches the economical director how to share alone in building a bridge, and if there are deaths, who repeats?"

—I daily regret being so dissatisfied, and that I have been obliged to pick up the little I know here. Were I accustomed to the use of the pencil, I should be spared a vast deal of trouble and time.